



# FLORIDA KEYS

## National Weather Service

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### Damage Survey for Tornado Event on April 5, 2013

#### Overview

A complex surface low pressure system extending from offshore the mid-Atlantic coast to central Florida, supported by a sharp upper trough extending southward over the Gulf of Mexico, produced strong thunderstorms in the Straits of Florida which moved northeastward across portions of the Florida Keys during the early morning hours Friday morning, April 5, 2013. One thunderstorm produced a tornado which moved ashore the extreme southern portion of Big Pine Key.

#### Big Pine Key Long Beach Estates Tornado

Rating:	EF-0
Estimated Peak Wind:	75–80 miles per hour
Path Length:	2.0 miles
Maximum Path Width:	80 yards
Fatalities:	0
Injuries:	0
Start Date:	April 5, 2013
Start Time:	3:10 a.m. EDT
Start Location:	Southern Big Pine Key
Start Location (latitude/longitude):	24.63 North / -81.36 West
End Date:	April 5, 2013
End Time:	Approximately 3:15 a.m. EDT
End Location:	Southeastern Big Pine Key
End Location (latitude/longitude):	25.65 North / -81.33 West

#### Survey Summary

A National Weather Service meteorologist surveyed wind damage along portions of the Long Beach Estates community on Big Pine Key, and found the damage pattern consistent with EF-0 tornado damage, with estimated 3-second wind gusts between 75 and 80 miles per hour.

A waterspout was observed backlit by frequent lightning strikes approaching Long Beach Estates from the west-southwest, passing to the south of the Newfound Harbor Keys. The waterspout moved ashore along the ocean side of Long Beach Drive, and passed over the observer's property. It was at this landfall location that the tornado was at its maximum intensity and width of about 80 yards. Widespread damage to large limbs of native hardwood trees occurred, and one royal palm snapped at a level above 15 feet. A ground deck with four kayaks became airborne with the dock dropped within mangroves beyond 30 yards from the original location. A large, unmounted above-ground cistern containing

nearly 200 gallons of water slid just over 15 yards, knocking a large camping trailer off its front mount. Bolts securing a large grill to ground decking were snapped, while numerous tables and lounge chairs were carried to the leeward side of the property. One 40-pound steel lounge chair was lifted to the edge of the roof line of the two-story (by height) residence, crushing the gutter before settling in the lee of the structure. Small gravel and peak rock along the waterfront caused moderate to severe paint chipping on the ocean side of several homes. Screens (including their wood frames) were torn off of several homes, with one home losing siding on the ocean side. A phone line was downed along Long Beach Drive.

The tornado continued along an east-northeast path, gradually crossing to the Coupon Bight side of Long Beach Drive. Damage was limited mainly to lawn furniture tossed, small to large hardwood branches downed, and knocked down wooden signs.

The tornado continued across mud flats along the southeast edge of Coupon Bight, where only isolated damage to mangrove branches was observed. Small limbs were observed downed across Long Beach Drive between Southeast Point and U.S. Highway One. The tornado eventually crossed through a campground just south of the Spanish Harbor Channel Bridge. Several tents were overturned before the tornado likely passed over Spanish Harbor Channel. It appeared the intensity of the tornado had decreased since its original landfall point near the western end of Long Beach Drive.

It is unknown whether the tornado crossed the Spanish Harbor Channel Bridge or dissipated soon afterwards. No additional land areas were affected.

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